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Tuesday, 17 October 2006

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TIMARU HERALD STORY

Salvation Army documents go missing

17 October 2006

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All records of a meeting between the Salvation Army and its officer accused of indecencies with children, were missing from a bound minute book.

Giving evidence in an historic sex abuse trial in the High Court at Timaru yesterday, Detective Tracey Miron of the Timaru CIB said minutes of meetings around the time John Francis Gainsford had been called to a meeting in Wellington, were missing from the bound minute book of the army's advisory board.

Gainsford, 69, a former Salvation Army officer, had managed the church's Bramwell Booth childrens home at Temuka from January 1973 to January 1975. At that time he was a captain in the Salvation Army.

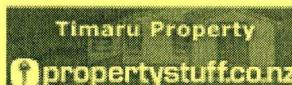
Gainsford, who now lives north of Auckland, has pleaded not guilty to 23 indecency charges. At the start of yesterday's trial he pleaded guilty to a further four charges.

Asked by Gainsford's counsel Paul Dacre, whether she was aware Gainsford had been called to Wellington in late 1974 as a result of a complaint regarding his behaviour towards some of the children at the home, Detective Miron said she was, but all records of the meeting as well as some other documents from late November 1974, were missing.

She had located a bound minute book of the church's advisory board, but it was clear to her documentation relating to about that time, had been removed. She was unable to find any church documents relating to the complaint.

The first of the eight complainants began her evidence yesterday, telling the court how Gainsford disappeared from the home after she told another girl what he had been doing to her.

She told the court how he would check her for appendicitis - checking her stomach and then her genital area and digitally



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penetrating her. He would stop when she complained it hurt. It wasn't until years later that she found out her appendix was not near her genitals.

There were times when Gainsford was on duty at night, that she felt unwell. He would take her to a room and get into bed with her. Twice he raped her although at the time she did not even know what rape was.

She spoke to other girls at the home about the things Gainsford did to her. One said it was wrong and told a staff member

The staff member told the girls not to make up such stories, but at the same time Gainsford disappeared and she never saw him at the home again.

Asked why initially she had told police of the indecencies but not the rape allegations, the woman said it had taken her a long time to come to terms with the fact that Gainsford had raped her.

The trial before Justice Fogarty and a jury of three men and nine women, continues today.

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